

Books and the People Who Make Them

THE pen drawing, by Spirit James McNeill Whistler of Spirit Patience Worth, on the first page, lacks the famous butterfly signature of the earthly Whistler and is, at first glance, a singularly undistinguished work of art. This we believe to be due to the fact that it is executed in four dimensions and reproduced only in two. The picture was drawn in the dark and the spirit of Whistler complained cuttingly of the way the table kept tipping as he worked.

Edward J. Clode has just published Louis Tracy's new novel, *The Revellers*, and pending a full report we should send out a "flash" something like this: "Boys and girls and a crime of passion in Yorkshire; German chauffeur; three-quarters of the book read and the war still to be dealt with!"

Isaac F. Marcossan has resumed his transatlantic commuting.

The John Lane Company is putting out still another book of verse by the Belgian poet Emile Cammaerts, *Messines and Other Poems*, in both French and English.

Count Paul Vassili, author of *Behind the Veil at the Russian Court*, is, we are told, Princess Catherine Radziwill, author of *Rasputin and the Russian Revolution*. Russia is all revolution and revelation.

Ever since the publication of W. E. Ford: *A Biography*, by George H.

From an American Soldier in France to His Mother in the U. S.: "I wish you and Dad would read 'A Student in Arms' by Donald Hankey. People back home always want dope on the war, by which is usually meant stories of the V. C., bursting shells, raids, etc. But there is another phase of war we all experience, and that is the effect of war on the inner man, his outlook, his philosophy; all of which are so deliciously handled by Hankey that I wish I had written the book myself. His thoughts to a great extent, especially as regards the Church, are the same that I have often thought. This book will give people back home an insight into the philosophic side of life at the front."

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Doran Company this spring, there has been a fuss over the indeterminate relations of W. E. Ford and J. D. Beresford and Kenneth Richmond, the "coauthors." As there never was a W. E. Ford nor a Kenneth Richmond the thing might seem fairly simple. Still the Library of Congress has solemnly entered the novel as "biography" under the letter F!

Among the fifty men Pershing sent over here to help in the third Liberty Loan drive was the man who is said to have fired the first shot of the American Army against the Germans, Osborne de Varila. In *The First Shot for Liberty*, published by the John C. Winston Company of Philadelphia, Corporal de Varila tells this and some other stories.

According to a letter just received in this country and appearing in the Philadelphia *Evening Public Ledger*, Sub-Lieut. William McFee, author of *Casuals of the Sea and Aliens* and now attached to H. M. S. Oxford on active service "somewhere east of Mercator's projection," has found a new character for some forthcoming novel. Here is the letter:

"A creole lady, whom you will some day meet in a story, once told me I had a great deal of 'hauteur.' What she meant was I had the typical Englishman's stand-offishness sticking out all over me, like a hedgehog's spines. True. I can't help that. But how I wish I could explain to strangers how genial, how humble, how conciliatory I am inside! What friendships I have missed, what love affairs, simply because of that damnable 'hauteur'! The fact is that although one or two generations have passed since my people were Irish, and although we have been crossbred with a few braided Scots and narrow English, the bad old Irish blood is coursing still. I feel this most boiling with rage over some grievance or choking with venomous thoughts about others, because I can see the joke. I can see the folly of my anger at the time. And I can see the joke when my preception of the joke is taken seriously by others and they ask what I am grouching about, anyway."

"I am having a week end away from the ship, which is at ———, that well known base on the Caspian. I am living (at famine prices) in a hotel and wandering about the town of Hub-el-Bubb-el, where, as you have read, the Algerian Deys are continually chasing the Arabian Nights and, I may add, the fleas are thronging in throngs. You wouldn't believe how these spring heeled little demons disturb one's philosophy. I have biffed two since starting this letter."

As some of our readers may know "Bartimeus" is Lewis A. Da Costa Ricci, and he chose that pen name because in his first years of naval service he was like to become as blind as the Bartimeus of the Bible. The sight of one eye was saved. Rudyard Kipling was among the first to appreciate "Bartimeus's" skill in sea yarns and wrote a letter to Ricci to tell him how good they were.

Literary honors, comfortably substantial ones, were awarded last week by the trustees of Columbia University, custodians of the Pulitzer prizes. Sara Teasdale's *Love Songs*, published by the Macmillan Company, was voted the best book of poems published in 1917 and Miss Teasdale is \$500 richer. William Cabell Bruce's *Benjamin Franklin, Self-Revealed*, published by G. P. Putnam's Sons, captured \$1,000 as the best American biography of 1917 "teaching patriotic and unselfish service to the people." Ernest Poole's *His Family*, another Macmillan book, won the \$1,000 prize for a novel and Jesse Lynch Williams's *Why Marry?* published by Charles Scribner's Sons, was the \$1,000 play. Among histories the prize winner was James Ford Rhodes's *History of the Civil War, 1861-1865*.

Lord Dunsany is not so stuck on his own plays. The *Dial* of Chicago prints

"A Very Clever Detective Story"
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By Frances Nimmo Greene

"Interesting, plausible and well written—it not only possesses an ingenious plot which holds the attention from the first page to the last, but it also contains excellent character drawing."—*New York Times*. \$1.35 net.

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

a letter in which he says of the contents of his *Five Plays*:

"*The Glittering Gate* is without beauty, being written in cockney dialect; *The Lost Silk Hat* is frivolous; and *King Argimenes*, though it has a pleasant beginning—a king in rags gnawing a bone—rather falls away from that inspiration and does not climb up as it should to a great climax, or in stage parlance 'a good curtain.' Yet there are certainly things in it I like myself, such as 'the tear-song, the chant of the low born' (the words have a pleasant sound to me as I recall them) and 'whoever be thy gods, whether they punish thee or whether they bless thee.' Yes, that is a new and unknown country right enough where people speak like that, and it is in an unknown country that I laid the play. But the construction is bad, though the atmosphere is all right. It was a very early play and I had the inspiration of a king sitting on the ground in rags eating his bone, and built the play on that, which is rather like building a roof and the house afterwards—but you do in America, don't you?"

"Then there is *The Golden Doom*, rather slight I fear; but there certainly is a truth in that, the very little having its share in events as much as the very great, as an inch of rope is as important as a mile of it. . . . But there is only one of the five with which I am content. I love *The Gods of the Mountain*."

Dunsany, apologizing to the *Dial* for a tardy reply, explained:

"I was in the Hindenburg line at the time and the place was not propitious to the mood of letter writing, which comes of leisure; and we occupied our leisure there in eating, sleeping and discussing subjects like the creation of the world and modern politicians and how to keep flies out of jam."

Do you remember Ben Ali, the Moroccan chef at Camp Upton who, as related in Frazier Hunt's *Blown In by the Draft*, said, "Sure, I take my prayer rug to Berlin with me"? What that guy needs is not a prayer rug, but a magic carpet.

What is this report that the collectors of books for soldiers exclude naughty French novels by Zola, Daudet, &c.? *Sapho* is said to be excluded from the fiction sent over there. Let us hope that our brave boys will not learn enough French to read any of those books in the original!

Ernest Thompson Seton, author of *Sign Talk*, which is to be published by Doubleday, Page & Co., asked a group of school children if they used sign language in school. He reports: "All denied any knowledge of sign language at first, but were themselves surprised on discovering how much of it they had in established use. In general I found about 150 signals in established use among American school children."

This war prophecy is recorded by William T. Hornaday in his just published book, *Awake! America*:

"At the close of the Spanish-American war I was returning on the Santee—I think it was—from Santiago, Cuba, to Montauk Point. The ship was carrying two troops of the Ninth Cavalry, some companies of Michigan volunteers and three or four companies of regular infantry. On board there was a military attaché from Germany, Count von Goetzen, a personal friend of the Kaiser. There also was an attaché from some South American country, possibly Argentina."

"Apropos of a discussion between Count von Goetzen and myself on the friction between Admiral Dewey and the German Admiral at Manila Von Goetzen said to me: 'I will tell you something

you had better make note of. I am not afraid to tell you because if you do speak of it no one would believe you and everybody will laugh at you.

"About fifteen years from now my country will start her great war. She will be in Paris in about two months after the commencement of hostilities. Her move on Paris will be but a step to her real object, the crushing of England. Everything will move like clockwork. We will be prepared and others will not be prepared. I speak of this because of the connection which it will have with your own country."

"Some months after we finish our work in Europe we will take New York, and probably Washington, and hold them for some time. We will put your country in its place with reference to Germany. We do not purpose to take any of your territory, but we do intend to take a billion or more dollars from New York and other places. The Monroe Doctrine will be taken charge of by us, as we will then have put you in your place, and we will take charge of South America, as far as we wish to. I have no hostility toward your country. I like it; but we have to go our own way. Don't forget this, and about fifteen years from now remember it and it will interest you."

"Count von Goetzen, it will be found, was a personal friend of the Kaiser, and afterward was employed on an important mission in China. He died some months before the breaking out of this war, probably a year. He married an American woman."

To readers who have been asking for information about Lieut.-Col. John McCrae, author of *In Flanders Fields*, one of the finest poems of the war: G. P. Putnam's Sons are publishing his poems and have prepared a biographical sketch of him. McCrae was a Canadian, a physician and a member of the faculty of McGill University. He saw service in the Ypres sector. He died in France on January 28, 1918, of pneumonia and meningitis. Some of his other verse approaches *In Flanders Fields*, perhaps equals it, in inspiration.

The Flower and the Bee; Plant Life and Pollination, by John H. Lovell, is a popular exposition of the subject of pollination.

Longmans, Green & Co. are publishing H. Rider Haggard's new novel, *Love Eternal*. It is a story set in England and abroad and is not only a love story but, according to the *London Times*, "a pretty one." No more thrills!

"The progress of the war could be traced by the cakes which were served at Rumpelmeyer's," says Esther Root and Marjorie Crocker in *Over Periscope Pond*, published by Houghton Mifflin Company. "When we first arrived in Paris we had the most delicious cakes at Rumpelmeyer's with gorgeous icings. Then a little later the icings thinned down. Then they disappeared entirely. Finally cream began to be scarce, until just before we left the famous place was fairly deserted at tea time save for a few people drinking tea and nibbling unsatisfactory toast."

Houghton Mifflin Company is publishing this month Captain Richard Haigh's *Life in a Tank*. Imagine Wellington or whoever exclaiming, "Up, tanks, and at them!"

Dog Watches at Sea, by Stanton King, is to be added to the ships' libraries of the American navy. Too late; the day of the dog watch is irrevocably past; they keep only wrist watches now.

BEFORE THE WIND

By JANET LAING

The *New York Sun* says:—"A thoroughly amusing novel, a blending of humorous character study with detective fiction. There is a complicated and exciting plot and a dual love story, as well as a 'double-barrelled detective story.' It will not do to tell what the plan was, but it may be said, at once and emphatically that as conceived and executed by the author through the medium of her two gentlemen the scheme is worthy of Frank Stockton at the height of his powers. And for originality no humorist anywhere could beat Stockton, not even Mark Twain."

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